

Exactly one year ago today, in Tucson, Arizona, a diverse group of Americans came together to meet their Member of Congress and to make their voices heard in the best tradition of our beloved democracy. This great meeting of neighbors and friends, this great exchange of dialogue and discourse was shattered by a tragic act of mindless violence.

Today, at 10:11 A.M., bells rang all across Tucson in memory of the tragic shooting that took place one year ago.

Today is to remember the fallen – six beloved Americans whose passion and purpose enriched the lives of so many others. Today is to recount the heroic actions of ordinary Americans and first responders alike who jumped into the fray, saved lives and prevented even greater heartbreak.

Today is to give thanks for the thirteen Americans who survived. One of those survivors, Representative Gabrielle Giffords, is a public servant whose dedication and determination is unsurpassed. I am honored to call her both colleague and friend.

Today is to embrace the lessons of the shootings' aftermath – how the Tucson community, heartbroken but unbowed, came together as one and inspired an entire nation in the process.

Today is to promise that the best angels of our nature will always drive our actions. A promise to protect our family, to honor our friends and to empower our community. A promise to give thanks for the living and to honor John, Dorothy, Phyllis, Mavy, Gabe and Christina – six brave Americans who animate what is right and true in all of us.

